

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Previously withdrawn)

7-9. (Previously cancelled)

10. (Previously amended) A carbon black, characterized by:

(i) being coated at least in part by a layer of aluminum oxide and/or hydroxide;

(ii) having a specific BET surface area of between 30 and 400 m<sup>2</sup>/g;

(iii) having an average particle size (by mass),  $d_w$ , of between 20 and 400 nm; and

(iv) having an ultrasound disagglomeration rate,  $\alpha$ , greater than  $1 \times 10^{-3} \mu\text{m}^{-1}/\text{s}$ .

11. (Original) The carbon black of Claim 10, wherein the disagglomeration rate  $\alpha$  is greater than  $1.5 \times 10^{-3} \mu\text{m}^{-1}/\text{s}$ .

12. (Original) The carbon black of Claims 10 or 11, wherein the black has an amount of surface aluminum greater than 0.5% (% by mass).

13. (Original) The carbon black of Claim 12, wherein the amount of surface aluminum is between 0.5% and 5%.

14. (Original) The carbon black of Claim 13, wherein the amount of surface aluminum is between 0.5% and 3%.

15-21. (Previously withdrawn)

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cont'd

22. (Previously amended) A process for reinforcing a diene rubber composition, comprising incorporating into the composition a carbon black of Claim 10.

23. (Previously added) The process of Claim 22, wherein the carbon black is incorporated in the composition by mixing in an internal mixer.

24. (Previously added) The process of Claim 22 further comprising subsequently curing the composition by vulcanization.

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